



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 2, 2008

**Statement on Tibet from Desmond Tutu, Chair of The Elders,
on Behalf of The Elders**

The people of Tibet wish to be heard. They have long sought autonomy, and chosen negotiation and mediation as their means of attaining it. They now turn to protest. The Chinese government should hear their voices, understand their grievances and find a non-violent solution.

That solution is offered by our friend and brother His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who has never sought separatism, and has always chosen a peaceful path. We strongly urge the Chinese government to seize the opportunity he provides for a meaningful dialogue. Once formed, this channel should remain open, active and productive. It should address issues that are at the heart of the tension, respecting the dignity of the Tibetan people and the integrity of China.

Throughout, the international community will be reassured if the government allows members of the press and United Nations Human Rights investigators full access within Tibet. Without that access, progress is unlikely and an opportunity may be lost.

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Notes to Editors

Nelson Mandela announced the formation of The Elders, July 18th, 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa on the occasion of his 89th birthday. Founding members of The Elders are: Graça Machel, Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan, Ela Bhatt, Lakhdar Brahimi, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Jimmy Carter, Li Zhaoxing, Mary Robinson and Muhammad Yunus.

“This group can speak freely and boldly, working both publicly and behind the scenes on whatever actions need to be taken,” Mandela commented. “Together we will work to support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair.”

The Elders will use their unique collective skills to catalyze peaceful resolutions to long-standing conflicts, articulate new approaches to global issues that are or may cause immense human suffering, and share wisdom by helping to connect voices all over the world.

In addition to working independently, The Elders will work to complement, not duplicate or compete with the efforts of other organizations. They will seek opportunities to partner with established groups in ways that help shine a light on work already underway or to assist in bringing the group's efforts to another level.

For more information please visit: www.theElders.org

For media enquiries, please call: Sara Latham (+44 7787 524 101); and Sam Hiersteiner (202-295-0171) Or please email: media@theElders.org